



November 2024 Newsletter

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Above: Coaches supported students on their "Love Letter to a Place" assignment at Hamilton High School earlier this month. We were delighted to work with Ms. Jane, a new teacher partner!

Coaching opportunities

Trained coaches can help fill the below coaching spots:

Flathead

Kalispell Middle School

Report on American Revolution & narrative

Monday, November 18, final draft

8:00 - 8:55am, 4 coaches needed (grade 7 report)

9:00 - 9:55am, 1 coach needed (grade 7 report)

9:55 - 10:45am, 2 coaches needed (grade 6 narrative)

1:15 - 2:05pm, 4 coaches needed (grade 7 report)

2:10 - 3:00pm, 2 coaches needed (grade 7 report)

Ravalli

Hamilton High School

9th grade, Love Letter to a Place, Gulman

[Tuesday, November 12](#), single draft

8:30-10:00am, 3 coaches needed

12:20-1:50pm, 4 coaches needed

Missoula

Hellgate High School

English Language Learners, Researching a Controversial Topic, Peters

[Wednesday, November 13](#), second draft

11:19am-12:08pm, 1 coach needed

12:58 -1:47pm, 3 coaches needed

Big Sky High School

9th grade, Poetry or Personal Narrative, Cook

[Monday, November 25](#), single draft

8:35-9:24am, 4 coaches needed

9:29-10:15am, 4 coaches needed

10:25-11:14am, 5 coaches needed

[Tuesday, November 26](#), single draft

8:35-9:24am, 4 coaches needed

9:29-10:15am, 4 coaches needed

10:25-11:14am, 5 coaches needed

Sentinel High School

11th grade, AP English, Allison

[Wednesday, December 4](#), single draft

8:35-10:05am, 3 coaches needed

[Thursday, December 5](#), single draft

8:35-10:05am, 4 coaches needed

10:45am-12:15pm, 5 coaches needed

9th grade, Of Mice and Men, Schick

[Wednesday, December 4](#), first draft

2:05-3:35pm, 1 coach

[Thursday, December 5](#), first draft

10:45am-12:15pm, 1 coach

[Wednesday, December 11](#), second draft

2:05-3:35pm, 1 coach

[Thursday, December 12](#), second draft

10:45am-12:15pm, 1 coach

Not a trained coach yet?

Register for Flathead's next workshop on [Wednesday, November 20th](#) or contact Jeanne Wdowin (jeanne@writingcoachesofmontana.org).

For folks interested in Missoula and Ravalli, contact coordinator Kat Jackson (kat@writingcoachesofmontana.org).

Save the Date for Giving Tuesday!



GIVING TUESDAY

Save the date for Tuesday, December 3rd! Giving Tuesday will kickoff the holiday giving season for many nonprofits, including Writing Coaches of Montana.

One of our holiday goals is to increase WCM's monthly donorship, Friends of WCM, which helps to support operating costs (your amazing WCM staff!) throughout the calendar year.

Every person who commits to giving monthly during 2025 will be entered in for a drawing to win a coffee-themed quilt, created by Ravalli coach and new board member, Denise Mahrer. Because Friends of WCM is a new program with only a handful of current donors, you'll have a great chance of winning! Commit to a monthly donation anytime from December 3-31 to be automatically entered into the raffle. More details to come soon!



Donate

New Flathead coach training workshop

Join Flathead Coordinator Jeanne Wdowin later this month for an interactive workshop to train new volunteer coaches.

Advanced registration (link below) is required.

[Wednesday, November 20, 10:15am-12:15pm, Imagine!F Library Kalispell](#)

Missoula craft fundraiser, November 16

Previous WCM board member Linda Whittlesey will be hosting a craft fundraiser on Saturday, November 16 from 12-5pm at 1856 11th Street West in Missoula.

Three artists will be selling their work at the event. They have each chosen a favorite nonprofit to benefit from a portion of the sales. Nonprofits include: [Writing Coaches of Montana](#) (jewelry, headbands, & peanut butter ball sales), [Spark!Arts](#) (wreath sales), and [Soft Landing Missoula](#) (card sales).

Email admin@writingcoachesofmontana.org with questions, or simply arrive for snacks, beverages, and a good time supporting great missions.









WHITEFISH
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
Giving Together for the Flathead Valley

Whitefish Community Foundation
10th
GREAT FISH
community challenge

Thank you!

Above (left to right): Executive Director Cassie Sheets, Flathead Coordinator Jeanne Wdowin, Board Directors Rita Braun and Tery Solomon celebrate with 79 other outstanding nonprofits which serve the Flathead Valley during the Great Fish Community Challenge Awards Ceremony in October.

WCM's first Great Fish Community Challenge: a wild success thanks to you!

The final Great Fish Community Challenge 2024 numbers are in and, oh my, we are so excited!

Thanks to 109 generous donors, WCM raised \$25,000 + a \$14,500 incentive match from Whitefish Community Foundation for a grand total of **\$39,500!**

What an incredible first Great Fish Community Challenge, thanks to outstanding Flathead community members and the Whitefish Community Foundation!

The future is bright for Flathead programming. Thank you to everyone who made this possible.



PRESENTS

WRITING MATTERS: A SCIENCE WRITING SERIES



WITH

KAT JACKSON

WCM COORDINATOR

LUCILLE VANEK

WCM INTERN & GEOLOGIST

New Writing Matters podcast episode

WCM's [podcast, Writing Matters](#), is back in its second season!

Host Kat Jackson (Missoula/Ravalli coordinator & development coordinator) and Lucille Vanek (previous intern) are this season's hosts, and they are tackling a fascinating series about writing in science!

The first episode in this series, "[Citations and Mad Scientists](#)," discusses science writing versus other genres. We'll be releasing additional episodes on the theme of writing in science over the next few months.

WCM Meet-up recordings on YouTube

WCM hosted two informative meet-ups this fall: [Understanding How Trauma Impacts Students](#) and [Supporting English Language Learners](#). You can find both of the meet-up recordings, along with other lifelong learning content, on WCM's [YouTube channel](#).



Growth Mindset: A Coaches' Blog

Greg Mueth joined WCM's Flathead coaching community in 2023. Here, Greg (right) enjoys a night out for a WCM fundraiser at Bias Brewing with Coach Diane (left) and a very important fellow coach, his wife Jill (middle).

Confidence is Writing's Secret Sauce

I was not an accomplished student. I earned loads of Bs and Cs, but only one D and nary an F. Now and again an A would accidentally fall upon my report card. Armchair psychologists might label my tween/teen motivations as both *fear of failure* and *fear of success*. I might have labeled myself *painfully—and perhaps permanently—average*. I wasn't going to set the world on fire and the world was not going to set me on fire, either. Good enough seemed to be good enough for me. Without shame, I often stated my full name as *Gregory C+ Mueth*.

Writing assignments were especially agonizing. Earning a crummy C was like running a marathon: way too much effort and angst to go just 26 miles. Regretfully, I'd often risk being caught for plagiarism than endure hours in front of a blank sheet of paper that would ultimately evolve into embarrassing drivel. I simply felt I had no thoughts worthy of putting on paper. Nor did I possess the skills necessary to make such a thought coherent.

FAST FORWARD: A few years back I became semi-retired from a rather successful and satisfying career as an advertising writer. I was pondering ways I might volunteer within the local community. An article in the Daily Interlake piqued my interest. It was about Montana Writing Coaches and their unique mission to *"Help Montana Students grow as confident and competent writers."* I could help kids like I was way back then get something I got. I was hooked!

REWIND: I caught fire for writing late in high school. In junior year English, I was offered the opportunity (revolutionary for 1972) to produce a film rather than write a short story. It became an 8-1/2 minute silent thriller about greed, consequence and redemption. It earned popular acclaim, at least within our small Illinois farming town. Ironically, other than the title and credits it included not one thing that resembled a sentence. But it did tell a story and it did reveal to me that I indeed had ideas worth expressing.

The next year—my senior year—I was itching to create another film for this same teacher. Maybe this time a talkie? But my astute instructor balked: "Greg, you've proven yourself a very capable filmmaker, but this time you'll have the opportunity to prove yourself a very capable essayist." I moped a bit but accepted the challenge. I researched and wrote about the racial and societal impact of the enormously popular "Amos 'n' Andy" radio/TV show of the 30s through 50s. There was no "critical acclaim" this time. (If "woke" were a thing then, it certainly would have been accused of such.) But it earned me an A+. And, several other English and History teachers were impressed enough to share it with their classes. I was quite proud of the turn-around I'd made during those two final years of high school.

SPLIT SCREEN: I also made another short film that year, but on my own time. It was a hippies vs. rednecks comedy that earned an honorable mention at a national amateur filmmaker competition. A few months later, I was off to college to pursue film and advertising... an impossibility for someone who was not a competent and capable writer!

That first film became the tiny seed of confidence I needed to continue to share my ideas and point-of-view... whether written, oral, or on film. I owe my English teacher and his "film experiment" for helping me become a better-than-average thinker and communicator.

As a writing coach, I sit alongside lots of little Gregorys, boys and girls, alike. I can see the struggle on their faces and in their prose. With these seemingly reluctant writers, my primary task becomes making a great big deal about something: a well-chosen word, a clever turn of a phrase, an idea that seems to come from the heart. Even a well-spelled word (albeit likely generated by spellcheck) earns a high-five from Coach Greg. That, I believe, introduces a tiny seed of confidence to begin our very brief coaching session.

From there we turn to improving a few quick and simple issues, like grammar or word choices. Then we move to more difficult aspects like structure or continuity. Throughout that time, I'm still trying to set up more high-fives. In 20 minutes I can't turn their tenuous draft into compelling prose. But I can plant a few tiny seeds that just might evolve into more confidence. My hope is that someday soon he or she will realize they do indeed have thoughts worth putting on paper.

—Greg Mueth

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